



# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● JUNE-JULY 1996

"The Glory which you have given me  
I have given to them...."

John 17 : 22

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*Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.*

## THE SOUTH INDIA CHURCHMAN

*The Magazine of the Church of South India*

**JUNE-JULY 1996**

*Incharge Editor, SICM*

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### Prayer for the Church

Awaken, O God, your church throughout the world to see in all the tensions and unrest of these times the cross of Christ as the one way of peace; and let the living Spirit of the Lord move among the churches everywhere that there may be a revival of that faith by which the lost were saved, the captives were set free, human hearts were changed and righteousness became victorious over sin. We ask it in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

*-Prayers of World Fellowship*

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*Hony. Business Manager*

## Letter from the Incharge Editor . . .

Dear Readers

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ whom we seek to serve by serving the church and society. You must have been waiting to receive the magazine *The South India Churchman*. Its publication has been delayed since June 1996. I am told, that the delay has been due to administrative reasons. The inconvenience caused to our readers is highly regretted. Rev. Nass Babu has been editing the magazine for the last several years as the Director of the Department of Communication of the Synod. The readers of the magazine very much appreciate his services and wish him all the best in his future ministry.

Very recently our Moderator, the Most Rev. Dr. Vasant P. Dandin and the General Secretary, Prof. George Koshy, asked me to be the incharge editor. I am grateful to the officers of the Synod of the Church of South India for this privilege of my association in the publication of our magazine. I earnestly seek your prayerful co-operation in this important work. *The South India Churchman* being the magazine of the Church of South India, is an important medium of communication. It is the voice of the church through the print media. We need to use it for the glory of God, for the good of the church and welfare of the society. It is a forum for sharing our views and reflections, caring for our ministry and putting our perspectives for the life and work of the church. It is a means for communication both within the church and outside. It is a cord that binds the people of the Church of South India from North to South, and West to East within South India. Let us make it as an

effective instrument for the unity and mission of the church today in our land; and a channel of communication with all our partners in the mission of God.

Through the columns of this page, I am extending an invitation to all of you—respected Bishops, officers of the Synod and the Diocesan Councils, theological teachers, pastors, lay leaders in various ministries and members of the church, who are interested in making their literary contributions through this magazine for the life and witness of our church. Please send your articles, poems, songs and reflections on the life and work of the church, to be considered for publication.

The Directors of the Councils and Departments of the Synod, officers of the Women's Fellowship of the CSI, and the Order of Sisters; the conveners/secretaries of the various boards and committees in our dioceses dealing with varied ministries of the church in the society, and all other wings of the church; are invited to send their brief reports regarding their work in terms of retreats/seminars, new initiatives and achievements, new programmes for mission and evangelism of our church etc.

*The South India Churchman* is our magazine—the church magazine. Therefore, let us share our views and insights, care our ministries and bear witness to the faith that we confess. You may send your writeups to me at the address given.

With all good wishes,

Your's in God's service

REV. DR. P. SURYA PRAKASH

# Good Bye

REV. DR. P.C. DASS BABU, *Former Editor*

One fine morning, while I was with the CLS, Hyderabad, I got a ring while day was breaking. 'Dass Babu, this is Victor (Bishop Victor Premasagar, then he was the CSI General Secretary), you are appointed the Editor of the South India Churchman, congratulations. Come to Madras and take over the charge...' He slammed down the receiver. I did not know how to take it. I have never asked for it, was it a dream? It was six in the morning.

In that moment of joy what first came to mind was the forecast made by my father while I was in the secular media-editor in the Indian Express. Once, showing me a copy of the South India Churchman which carried his article-on a pilot scheme which was introduced in the villages of the Dornakal Diocese-he asked me, 'How about writing articles to this magazine?' 'Me, writing to a church magazine? I'm afraid I'm not yet ready.' 'One day you will write 'it is there the prophetic words that flashed in my mind. It was my dad, Rev. Benjamin Prasadaraao, who shaped my early writings and gave me all his library books which were worth their weight in gold.

It is like one having to leave a place where he has spent the most fruitful part of his career that I pen this editorial. My mind flashes back to that day when I took over as the editor of the South India Churchman and I see the scene like it was yesterday: What overwhelming affection I was received with! And the affection has since grown. I could not have worked with better people for fifteen long years!

The Church of South India is a vast organisation extending over four states, each having its own rich linguistic and cultural heritage. Thus, being the editor of the South India Churchman, the only CSI mouthpiece, is an honour. I acknowledge my debt to the church and to all my predecessors and to the officers of the Synod.

The magazine is not a light reading to be flipped through on a bus ride or while holidaying. It was unique forum for writers, critics, young hopefuls artists, theologians, pastors and laymen/women. A random sample of its pages will quickly show the value and quality of its contents.

If I may say so, right from the beginning I have set my sights on three things: encourage young hopefuls, encourage lady contributors and focus on current burning issues. And, I am happy to say that these have actually triggered and there has been a boost in the readership.

An editor generally gets interlocked in sparring matches with the contributors over matters relating to the publishing and refinement of the articles and these quickly turn into long-standing warfare. Happily, never once have I had such bitter experience. All this would not have been possible without the right attitude of the powers that be and here I would like to thank Bishop Solomon Doraisam the then Moderator, who, while giving ready help and advice, never did so in dictating terms. The other moderators, the General Secretaries specially the present officers have been of immense help to me especially in matters relating to the finance and policies. The CLS Pre-people, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Devadoss worked tirelessly put out the magazine regularly inspite of the financial constraints and Dr. T. Dayanandan Francis, deserve special thanks.

I thank all the contributors who have sent in the articles, and my office staff, specially Mona, here in Hyderabad and Maragatham in Madras for processing the articles.

As an editor I have been hearing the running commentary on the events, problems and the workings of all the twentyone dioceses-different situations, different issues and different people- that was an experience I have gained. I have also come into contact with thinkers and theologians-it was an intellectual stimulation. I will plough all this know-how back into the Church in a different capacity.

It is with supreme satisfaction of handing the editor's baton over to the next editor and saying 'over to you' that I leave the desk. Good bye and God bless you.

# Love's Pain

RT. REV. DR. SAM AMIRTHAM, *Bishop of South Kerala Diocese*

Something interesting happened to me recently, when wife and I were spending one month of our Sabbatical Sattal Ashram in Nainital district, an Ashram started Dr. Stanley Jones. The Ashram's Annual English gramme was going on. There were about 40 adults children in the group. As it happens in any such ference, persons got to know each other well and some attached rather intimately.

There was a young couple with their two and half months old baby. Libby is her name. She was so well loved and so cheerful all the time that every one was gratulating the parents for having got such a 'special' of a perfect child. It seemed that in her own silent she was absorbing the Ashram atmosphere of quiet silence. Those who first raised their eyebrows stioning the wisdom of the parents in bringing such y to the Ashram, where all duly silenced. The baby ame the centre of attraction and the darling of every . She would keep lying by herself on the floor of the pel or on the table at meal times, giving no trouble anyone. The family got attached to us so much that in I became the 'grandpa' of Libby.

Libby had had the first dose of triple antigen about month ago. It was time to take the second dose. For , the parents had to take her to Bowali, about 12 km m Sattal. The previous day, the parents requested me accompany them. I was wondering why I was invited this hospital visit as I neither knew the place, nor had medical or child care skills!

In the car, on the way to the hospital, I asked the ther, while I appreciated their taking the freedom to me, why they picked on me, rather than some one e, for example my wife. It came out that the young ther would not bear the pain of the cry of the child en the prick was given by the nurse. She wanted some e courageous to hold the baby when the injection was en. She wouldn't trust her husband too, so she thought Bishop's presence could solve the problem for her. e did she knew that when such things happened in own family I would not be anywhere near and let wife handle the situation!

In the hospital, when the formalities were done and was time for the inoculation the mother dropped the oy in my hands and literally ran away so far that she uld not have to hear the painful cry of the baby. So eld the baby, the father standing nearby. To our surprise, child didn't cry at all either because her pain-bearing efficient was high or because the nurse was such an pert with babies. When she thought that every thing is over, the mother returned and took the baby from . To be sure, she was much teased by me and her

husband for her 'courage' in leaving the baby with 'a stranger'. Then she said, 'Uncle, I can bear any pain myself, but I can't bear the pain of my child'. Fortunately most young mothers are braver than this one!

This made me to reflect. The nature of love in relation to pain. Human love always holds in itself an element of pain. When a baby is born, the mother undergoes pain, only to forget it as soon as she sees and feels the tiny 'bundle of love', or hears the cry of the newborn: announcing its arrival in the world. Agony soon turns to ecstasy.

In bringing up children, parents suffer sleepless nights, when such innocent ones at day time, insist on having 'moving cradles' in the night. When a child is ill, parents spent hours of agony and uncertainty. While growing up, if teenagers make a mess of their lives, parents agonise. When major surgical treatment, is needed for a person, not only the close relative of the patient but many close friends also suffer pain and anxiety. Love partakes in the pain of the beloved. We may even say the test of intensity of love is in intensity of pain.

One of the moving scenes in the Old Testament is the story of Hagar wandering in the desert with her son 'sent away' from her home (Gen. 21:9-17). When the drinking water she carried was exhausted and the little son was in danger of death by dehydration, she put the child under a bush and she went nearby and sat a good way off against him and for she said 'let me not see the death of the child'.. and lifted her voice and wept'. This was all that a helpless mother could do. It was the mother's heart that suffered the pain. It was the loving heart that wept.

We remember that our Lord also wept, participating in the pain of the two sisters of Bethany, whose brother Lazarus died. 'Jesus therefore saw her (Mary) weeping and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in his spirit and was troubled...Jesus wept' (John 11:30-). It is a comfort in our lives that our Lord himself participates in our pains. His is a love that knows our pain.

A couple had lost their only son, killed in an accident. The father would not be comforted for many days. The pastor made several visits and was sharing in the pain of the parents, just by his presence words being inadequate and inappropriate. On one occasion the father anguished and asked 'Pastor, where was God when my son died?' Pastor took the right hand of his friend into his and with wet eyes and choked voice said, 'My friend, He was exactly there, where He was, when His Son was killed'.

The Gospel of Christ surely assures us that we have a God who know's love pain.

# VACANCIES

## CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA-SYNOD

Applications are invited for the following posts from dedicated Christian candidates in the Synod of the Church of South India with headquarters at Madras.

### 1. DIRECTOR—COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION

The applicant should be a Post Graduate Degree holder with experience in administration and exposure in the field of Education for atleast 10 years.

### 2. DIRECTOR—COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The applicant should hold a master's degree in Engineering with a zeal to conduct training programmes, seminars, camps, etc. in the technical field with atleast 10 years of experience.

### 3. DIRECTOR—COUNCIL FOR HEALING MINISTRY

The applicant should hold a Post Graduate Degree in Medicine with specialisation in Community Health and should have atleast 10 years experience in the field of Health Care.

### 4. DIRECTOR—COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

The applicant should be a Post Graduate Degree holder with good knowledge of communication skills and capable of editorial work. He should have atleast 10 years of experience in the field of communication or any related fields.

### 5. DIRECTOR—CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The applicant should be a Post Graduate Degree holder in Theology, preferably with specialisation in Christian Education, with zeal to conduct Sunday School programmes, scripture lessons examinations and seminars etc. with not less than 10 years of experience.

*For all the above posts:*

**Age Limit** : 45 to 55 years

**Service & Salary Conditions** : Term basis (initially for a period of 3 years and extendable for another 2 more years on satisfactory completion in the first instance and subject to our conditions).

Salary negotiable.

The candidates selected will have to work in the CSI headquarters in Madras with Christian commitment. The area of operation of the above Council/Departments extends to all CSI Dioceses in four southern states of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.

*All applications for the posts mentioned above should reach :*

**The General Secretary  
CSI Centre  
5, Whites Road  
Royapettah, Madras-600 014**

**ON OR BEFORE 15th DECEMBER 1996**

# The Church of South India : A Movement for Christian Unity

RT. REV. DR. P. VICTOR PREMASAGAR  
*Former Moderator and Bishop of Medak*

The inauguration of the Church of South India on September 1947 is, perhaps, the greatest event in the story of the Christian Church since the Reformation. There was excitement in the air and expectation, as members of the previously divided churches came together in St. George's Cathedral, Madras to affirm their oneness and inaugurate the united church. This was the year in which India became independent and for the Indian church, it was a venture of faith, declaring to be the church of the world, uniting for the sake of sharing the Gospel with our people. It all began in Tranquebar in the year 1919. Thirty Indian church leaders and two missionaries gathered here and expressed their intention to be one united church in India.

In response to the prayer of Jesus in the Upper Room. (John 17.26),

In obedience to the teaching of the Scripture. (Ephesians 4.1-16)

To fulfil the task of winning India for Christ.<sup>1</sup>

After twenty-eight years of negotiations, the Anglicans, South India United Church (a union of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in 1904), and the Wesleyan Methodists formed into one Church. The Church of South India does not want to be identified as yet another denomination in the World Church, but as a movement for unity of all Churches in India and throughout the world.

The Derby Commissions, appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1946, makes two comments on the South India Scheme of Union—that it could have been

- (i) a more authentic expression of a truly Indian Christianity
- (ii) more radical and not simply a synthesis of the divergent post-Reformation traditions of the West.<sup>2</sup>

It may be observed, that although this was perhaps the best union possible, they did not relate it to the religious and cultural heritage of India. The union discussions were based on contributions by Biblical, Patristic, Reformation and Theological scholars from

Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Basel, The Lambeth Conference and others. They were mostly missionary and western debates based on the Church Fathers, Ignatius and Cyprian, Reformation and denominational particularities and not related to the context of poverty and the multi religious ethos of India. The experience of the United Church during the last fifty years has been one of discovering afresh, the riches of the glory of Gospel given to the Church, but the risen and ascended Lord. We may note the following important phases of the life of the church.

## 1. A Pilgrim Church

The church saw itself as a pilgrim church always on the move—never satisfied with the *status quo* but ever moving forward to be a foretaste of the unity of all churches and all peoples, the Kingdom of God. In 1952 Marcus Ward wrote *The Pilgrim Church*<sup>3</sup> outlining the tasks of the young church, projecting its future hopes and aspirations as embedded in the Constitution and an account of first five years of the church. In 1958 Rajaiah D. Paul, the General Secretary of the Synod, published *The First Decade*<sup>4</sup> introducing the young church in terms of its intention for union and the story of its development and mission, its life and works, liturgy and worship.

## 2. Integration and Joint Action

The church was occupied with integration of the different denominational sections and striving to initiate coordinated action in mission. In 1961 the Synod set up a commission with Rajaiah D. Paul as the convener to evaluate the life and work of the church in response to the National Christian Council's call to all churches to evaluate themselves. They published the Commission's report with the title *Renewal and Advance: Report of the Church of South India on Integration and Joint Action, 1963*.<sup>5</sup> This is an honest critique of the Church, as it completed fifteen years. Mark Gibbard highlights some findings of this report and adds his own observations in his book, *Unity is not Enough*.<sup>6</sup> The suggestions of this report were somehow not acted upon by the church.

### 3. After Thirty Years

In 1977 the Synod appointed a commission to study the life and work of the church. This is often called the 'Abel Commission' after the Convener Dr. M. Abel, the former principal of the Madras Christian College. This year was significant as it ended the thirty-year Pledge, taken at the time of the union assuring during that period, the services of episcopally ordained ministers to the former Anglican congregations. The Report was published in 1978 with the title *CSI After Thirty Years: A Report of the Life and Work of the Church*<sup>7</sup>. This again was a critical study of the life and work of the Church with several suggestions for renewal and indigenisation, but these were not implemented. This report, in a way, may be seen as a response to the criticisms of the Derby Report which observed that the proposed union could have been more radical and more Indian. Some suggestions of the Report are so radical, that the church found it difficult to consider them and even resolved that the report has no official standing in the Church.

### 4. Priorities in Mission

In 1982 the Church published a report of the Consultation on *Priorities for the Mission of the Church*<sup>8</sup>, after a two-year study and discussion on Mission Priorities throughout the church. The Church for the first time identified its mission issues, set priorities for action and resolved to raise local resources for mission. Earlier, its mission was limited to the resources made available by the overseas mission bodies. Now the church took upon itself the responsibility for mission and its support and invited their former missions and overseas churches to a mature partnership in relation to the mission priorities set by the united church. The church also offered to assist the overseas churches in their mission priorities.

While all the dioceses share the resources received from overseas partner churches, the local resources are not shared among the dioceses as an expression of the organic unity of the church. Some dioceses with major cities and commercial projects have abundant resources but the rural dioceses continue to be poor unable to meet the basic salaries of the church workers. George Koshy the General Secretary has raised in his report at the recent Synod meetings in Coimbatore but there does not seem to have been any response to this call. This was raised earlier during the consultation on evaluation of the priorities in 1989 but went without any action in this regard.

### Departments and Councils

As an outcome of the Consultation on Priorities, the Synod has set up Councils and Departments to help the Dioceses in pursuing their mission priorities. The Councils

relate to the institutional ministries in the Church and Departments to the work of the whole church. They served to initiate and coordinate mission action through the church. In 1989 there was an evaluation of the priorities and new priorities were set up to meet the new needs in the context.

### Institutions and Diaconal Ministry

Immediately following the consultation on Priorities there was a study of the service institutions and the pattern of ministry in the church. It was observed that the service institutions of the church were started and led by missionaries, who besides their professional skills had theological and mission orientation and training before they came to India. They saw their professions as part of the mission team along with the ordained ministers. The same commitment was not found in their Indian counterparts, as they saw their work as mere opportunities and not as part of the mission of the church. A special training on Diaconal Ministry was set up to impart diaconal orientation to all the leaders in the service institutions of the church and in the community. The church hoped to set up a permanent diaconal ministry which would raise the spirituality of the institutions giving special diaconal orientation to the Christians serving in institutions such as the educational, health, youth and children's Christian education, development and other new ministries of the church. It was suggested that those receiving a call to full time diaconal service could be set apart as the diaconal ministers of the church. The diaconal ministers would have the same standing as the ordained ministers of the church. This would give diaconal ministry a permanent status as opposed to the present nature of the diaconate as a temporary ministry and a stepping stone to the presbyterate. But this could not be carried out mainly because the ordained ministry was not willing to share the mission responsibilities with the professional lay workers in the church and in the community at large.

### Women Presbyters

The approval for the ordination of women to the presbyterate was another important decision of the church in 1982. The ministry of women has blessed the church. The way is open, and perhaps the church may soon have a woman Bishop and even a Moderator. Many women are offering themselves to the ministry, studying theology and undergoing ministerial training. We have several women theologians in the church today. Yet there are difficulties in ordaining women in some dioceses and some congregations are not willing to receive women presbyters. This will change as the churches experience women's growth in ministry. Women's and youth participation in the life and work of the church is assured by providing representation to each of these on all committees and councils of the church at all levels.

## Local Congregations in Mission

As the Church pursued the priority for Evangelism, came to discover afresh the importance of the local congregation as the focus for mission. After a major study mission at the congregational, Diocesan and Synod levels, the programme of the Vision for Equipping Local congregations in Mission (VELCOM) was initiated in 1987. Posters depicting the four stages of VELCOM-Agape, Agenda, Analysis and mobilizing of local resources and action were displayed in all churches. Twelve Bible studies were published with the title *Congregations in Mission*<sup>9</sup>, to inspire and encourage congregations to creatively engage in local mission. The Synod Councils and Departments drew up and arranged appropriate training programmes. There was an immense response from congregations-they began to take responsibility for mission in their local situations and train multiform leaders to meet the needs of the diverse programmes of mission. Wherever they implemented this vision, there was a renewal of the local church with positive and enthusiastic mission action.

As one closely associated with the leadership of the church of South India for more than twelve years I would like to make a few critical observations on the nature and direction of the church and the issues that confront the church today. This is done with great love for the church, acknowledging that I am a part of this church, to encourage a positive development that it may be a fit instrument in the hands of God for the strengthening of the movement for unity of the churches and for his mission in the world.

## Authority and Structures

The union negotiations discussed the 'parity of the ministries' at length but did not sufficiently address the question of 'authority in the church'. The Indian Bishops and presbyters filled the void created by the leaving of the missionaries, not so much as the servants of the servant of God, but as elitist administrative cadres. It was K.T. Paul of the SIUC, who during the union negotiations, warned that the patriarchal and authoritarian system of the Indian social structure is a danger to the Indian church. He observed that the monarchical and hierachial structures of the traditional church orders are not helpful, which the Ranquebar Statement, on the other hand had thought would be most natural and helpful.<sup>10</sup> The hierarchical structures tend to seriously undermine the fellowship and brother/sisterhood in the ministry. Bishop Priestly lists this as one of the fears he had at the time of the inauguration of the Church of South India.<sup>11</sup>

The traditional bonded-labourer mentality of the out castes in relation to the landlords still persists in village India. This was the attitude of church workers towards the missionaries and a similar complex still persists in the Indian church today.<sup>12</sup>

The structures of the church are top heavy and are elaborately organized, similar to those of the churches in the west but not in relation to the poverty of most of our people, majority of whom are from the Dalit and unskilled daily farm labourer communities. The Church has become captive within the western missionary structures in its style and functioning.

Ecclesiastical structures appear to be status symbols as in the political sphere.

The leadership, instead of challenging the social, economic and political issues that affect the majority of our people, tends to be introverted and self-serving. Self support is seen as support for the episcopal and ministerial workers and does not relate to the developmental and social issues that confront our people. The overwhelming poverty of our people has not yet been addressed as a mission imperative by the Indian church.

## II Democracy and Elections

The so-called democracy tends to become undemocratic when one party captures power and uses it for selfish ends. All that happens in the political elections influences the elections in the churches. Elections are won by promises made beforehand to the supporters and these are fulfilled after the party wins the elections. The job opportunities and other resources of the church are controlled by the party in power so that the others are frustrated. This breaks the fellowship in every local congregation<sup>13</sup>. Every election alienates the majority in preference for a few. This happens right from the Pastorate Committee to the Diocesan Council and the Synod. This is the plight of the Bishop's election also where one is appointed and the other three elected to the panel feel frustrated and their supporters often take the issue to the civil courts. Episcopacy is no check against these, because they themselves are in danger of being either coopted or controlled by the party in power. Such pressures are not uncommon at the Synod level as well. They tend to create untold trouble in the church. The quarrels in the congregations and the continuing strife amongst the members, do not make for good witness to those outside the church, especially the peoples of other faiths.

## III Ministry and Theological Training

Transfer of presbyters tends to be another important issue in the church. Some Presbyters would like to be in the city and urban areas and do not want to go to villages.

Wife's employment, children's education and town facilities are often the reasons for this. Transfers even after due consultation and express needs of the church, are often taken to courts. The party in power tries to protect those who supported their party and wreaks vengeance on those who did not support them in the elections, by transferring them without any consideration to their particular needs and circumstances. The Presbyters often take leadership and set up their parties in each pastorate and create division at every level.

Theological education and ministerial training have become elitistic to the extent that many graduates are not willing to serve in villages where the need is greater than the cities. Long theological education tends to wean young ministers away from their own villages, and from their people. There are several pastorates with absentee pastors who turn up for the Sunday services, but live elsewhere during rest of the week. Thereby pastoral care is not available to the poor in the villages who form the majority in the Church. There is need for a renewed commitment to the village congregations by the whole church.

### Conclusion

The church in every generation has to struggle with issues that confront the church and the human community. We have instances in the early church, described in the epistles, of the struggles the church had to engage in the early times. It may despair when it is not be able to succeed or overcome them, but the issues should not be left unchallenged as long as there is a believing and worshipping community.

The Church of South India, in spite of its weaknesses, has endeavoured to be faithful in its witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in her commitment to her Lord. We

pray that as the church celebrates Golden Jubilee of the Union, the Holy Spirit may guide the Church into all truth and that it will continue to be faithful in proclaiming the mystery of the faith as it is affirmed in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Your death O Lord we commemorate  
Your resurrection we confess, and  
Your second coming we await  
Glory be to you O Christ.

### Notes

1. Bengt Sundkler, *The Church of South India: The Movement towards Union 1900-1947*, London Lutwworth Press 1954, pp. 91-107. The text of the Manifesto is in pp. 101-103.
2. Ibid pp. 346-347.
3. Marcus A. Ward, *The Pilgrim Church*, Madras: CLS, 1958.
4. Rajaiah D. Paul, *The First Decade*, Madras CLS, 1958.
5. *Renewal and Advance: Report of the Church of South India Commission on Integration and Joint Action*, ed. Rajaiah D. Paul, Chairman, Madras: Synod CSI and CLS, 1963.
6. Mark Gibbard, *Unity is not Enough: Reflections after a Visit to the CSI*, A.K. Mowbray & Co., Ltd. 1965.
7. *CSI After Thirty Years: A Report of the Life and Work of the Church*, Convener M. Abel, Madras: CSI Synod and CLS 1978.
8. *Priorities for the Mission of the Church*, Ed. Dass Babu, Madras: CSI and CLS 1982.
9. P.V. Premasagar, B.S. Devamani and H.S. Wilson, *Congregations in Mission*, Ed. Dass Babu, Madras: CSI Synod 1989.
10. Bengt Sundkler, op. cit., p. 133.
11. Eber Priestly, *The Church of South India: Adventure in Union*, London: CSI Council in Britain, 1970, p.4.
12. Mark Gibbard, op. cit., p. 74, points to this problem in the church.
13. *Renewal and Advance*, op. cit., p. 59, draws attention to this in the section on 'Faction and Litigiousness'.

## OBITUARIES

The South India Churchman regrets to inform the readers the passing away of the following Bishops of the Church of South India in the recent past.

RT. REV. DR. C.D. JATHANNA, Former Bishop, Karnataka Central Diocese

RT. REV. B. PRABHUDASS, RT REV. G.B. DEVASAHAYAM, Former Bishops of Karimnagar Diocese

RT. REV. NOAH SAMUEL, Bishop in Dornakal

While we thank God for their life and witness, let us uphold their families and loved ones in our prayers for God's sustaining guidance.

—Editor

# Into a New Millennium with Interreligious Dialogue

HANS UCKO\*

In September of 1893 the first Parliament of the World's Religions took place in Chicago. It was the first time in history that representatives of all faiths assembled to listen and meet one another in a spirit of openness and mutual respect. Swami Vivekananda, founder of the Ramakrishna Order in India, was one of the participants and one of those who will always be identified with this first modern interreligious dialogue. In one of his speeches he defined one important principle of dialogue: The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor is the Hindu or Buddhist to become a Christian. But members of each religion must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve their individuality and grow according to their faith.'

100 years later we witness a dynamic process of interreligious understanding and cooperation, from which there is definitely no return. People of various faiths come together to learn from each other, cultivate a culture of dialogue and seek ways of cooperation.

The Jewish-Christian dialogue is one example here. The history of Jews and Christians, particularly in Europe has been a tragic history. Antisemitism, ghetto, pogroms and the Holocaust are words filled with a painful history. There has been a change. The Second Vatican Council made a unique conversion when declaring that the Jewish people were still in covenant with the God of Israel and that the Christian accusation of the Jews being *deicidi*, God-killers, was wrong and in itself an ignominy. The WCC declared in 1948 that antisemitism was a sin against man, woman and God. The Jewish-Christian dialogue has become a reality in many parts of the world and Christians are learning about the roots of Christianity in Judaism.

The Christian-Muslim dialogue knows a similar although different development. There is a new understanding among Christians and Muslims, a cooperation on questions concerning social issues, migrant workers and refugees. There are groups of Christians and Muslims in Great Britain, France and Germany, which are trying to counter outbursts of xenophobia and racism. Interreligious

dialogue has come to stay and not only in the West. Asia is of old a continent of religious pluralism and knows many examples of interfaith cooperation on issues of common concern: justice, peace, environment. There are many small groups emerging in countries in Asia which are committed to countering eruptions of communalism and interreligious conflicts.

There are reasons to rejoice that people of different faiths have discovered each other and that respect and confidence have become part of our encounter with the other. But we realize too that there is a significant rise in conservatism and fundamentalism in most religious traditions. It seems as though it is this dimension of growing religious fundamentalism or integrism that has the upper hand. This fundamentalism, called by different names in different religious environments, signifies not only a going back to sources, in itself commendable, but does so with a defensive and even antagonistic militancy. Going back to sources seems to mean finding instruments against the other and against the modern world, which is perceived as a threat.

Today there are calls for a rechristianization of Europe, a winning back of souls for Christ and a reclaiming of Europe as a Christian home, enough to marginalize Jews and Muslims, who have contributed to making Europe what it is today, but who now feel targeted by a decade of evangelization. There are fervent dreams of a Greater Israel with God-given rights but few obligations, enough to keep in fear and trepidation those who for centuries have lived in the country. Those advocating a Greater Israel as part of salvation for the Jewish people seem unaware that others, by their destruction, make possible this redemption. There are calls for *jihad*, where the emphasis is on militant struggle rather than on inward commitment, with dreams of a Muslim transformation of *dar-al-gharb*, the abode of war, into *dar-al-islam*, the abode of Islam. The conflicts between a secularized Europe and Muslim immigrants or migrant workers on the question of the *chador*, the veil, testify among other things to a growing insecurity between Christians and Muslims. The insecurity is, so far as Muslims are concerned, not without reason: and eruption of racism, in Germany burning homes

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of Turks, many of whom were born in Germany and are as German as their murderers, and in the media an overall image of Islam as the age-old enemy of Christianity. In the wake of communism, now demised in Eastern Europe, a new devil has been designed, the Muslim threat. The seeming apathy of Christian Europe towards the plight of Muslims in Bosnia, or the occupation for 25 years of the West Bank and Gaza, compared with the zeal of the West to crush Iraq and Saddam Hussein, seems to give Muslims reasons enough to take refuge in Islam as a protection against what is perceived as a hostile and godless society. There are dreams of Hinduization of India made concrete in a growing Hindu crusade against Muslims. The Babri Masjid of Ayodhya was, thanks to the passivity of the Indian government, torn to the ground by activists of the Hindu party, BJP. Expressions of fundamentalism are more than manifest: from a Muslim theocracy in Iran to American-based, born-again Christian sects actively proselytizing throughout the world, to Singhalese Buddhist movements in Sri Lanka or dreams of state Shinto in Japan.

Religious language and concepts are being used to promote political goals. The battle-cry from the crusade, DEUS LO VULT! God wants it!, may belong to the history of the Christian march to Jerusalem, when aroused soldiers slaughtered Jews and Muslims in the name of the Triune God, but the battle-cry has reverberations in the politics of today.

George Bush told a meeting of religious broadcasters that the US-led coalition against Iraq was 'on the side of God'. Saddam Hussein called Muslims to a jihad against the allied forces, knowing that a reference to jihad might rally more than his own people to back the occupation of Kuwait. Other Muslims, including those of the coalition, would understand where their real solidarity lay, not against a brother Muslim but with fellow Muslims. Operation Desert Storm was dressed in religious language and received over-tones to make it easier to digest.

When Menachem Begin said: 'Nobody can tell me whether I can stay or not in Judea and Samaria. This right is given to me by God, the father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', he knew which signals to send to fellow Jews. Who cares about international opinion, if God is on your side?

Religious language is easily turned into a tool for ideological and political gain. When historical memory is twisted in a way that suits certain political goals, and religious adornment and coating is used to conceal the underlying truth, then religion has got out of hand. The metaphors of religious language develops legs of their own and walk out of their own context. Here they create analogies in the immanent reality: the kingdom of God

no longer refers to God's transcendence but becomes *Civitas Dei*, the State of God, theocracy and at its worst, the Third Reich. When the concept of 'the chosen people' is let loose from its own context, it may take the shape of a racial or national community, where apartheid and its like bolster privileges but never obligations. When jihad, holy war, no longer signifies the spiritual inward struggle against evil, it turns into concrete armed fight, where the moral commitment of jihad is lost. It seems as if each religious tradition contains the temptation of parochialism, of chauvinism and of exclusivism, thinking of itself as the preferred of God, and the other is dismissed.

Religious traditions are still used to nurture suspicions among people of different faiths. Categorizations, treating people 'en bloc', fit into a strategy whereby our own encounter with and experience of individual Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus or Sikhs is pushed aside to the benefit of a preconceived pattern, where Jews are per definition greedy and conspire to world power, where Muslims are terrorists, Sikhs too, where Christians are compulsory missionaries and colonialists and Hindus apathetic to the real needs of society. When there is no prophetic self-criticism to check the eruptions of self-aggrandizing, there are reasons to fear even the most godly language. Abuse of religious traditions is particularly virulent when a neighbour is denigrated, and even more, when his or her religious tradition is declared void and meaningless in the eyes of God, when God is made partisan to one's own political ambitions, when one is taught to love and esteem only those of one's own community. As Christians we still have a long way to go before we can undo much of the harm that has been done to people of other religions in the name of Christianity. There are many wounds. The Jewish people will always bear in mind that antisemitism, hatred of the Jews, was also cultivated in the church and built into a theological system. Muslims in the Middle East are still scarred by the swords of the crusaders. Hindus have been rejected as polytheists, Buddhists as atheists, and indigenous people regarded simply as objects for conversion. There is today, maybe as a consequence of the ecumenical movement, a visible change of mind taking place among Christians, a realization that we may not hold the irrefutable truth about our neighbours, people of other faiths. In our rethinking about ourselves and people of other faiths, more attention should be given to the corrective role the Old Testament has played and continues to play in the Jewish tradition. Here a holy scripture, far from blindly boosting the self-image of the Jewish people, instead reminds the people of its calling and is over and over again critical of its doings. It is a holy scripture that leaves little room for self-aggrandizement. This holy scripture keeps instead a slave constantly whispering, 'Memento tu mortalem esse!', remember that you are mortal! The recurrent admonition is to remember and not forget 'the covenant that the LORD your God made with you'.

Perhaps religious fundamentalism is best characterized by what it rejects, i.e., the view that there are things in religion that should not be taken literally, that sometimes a symbolic understanding of religious language helps in avoiding conflict with those holding other views and understandings. Religious fundamentalism wants nothing of compromise but rather wants to preserve or recreate a literal, absolute and strict faith. And although the current trend in modern society seems to advocate the very opposite of that which fundamentalism stands for, it seems as if religious fundamentalism is not losing out but actually thriving exactly because of a lack of sustainable values in today's society. The individual, through religious fundamentalism, is given a firm footing, a coherence and a normative authority, defying every rationalism and relativism. Nevertheless, defensive and antagonistic fundamentalism seems to be an expression of a longing for security, a dream of Paradise Lost in a world that has become threatening and dangerous. It expresses a need to hide behind the walls of a ghetto in a world void of values. The vacuum of ideal following the dismantling of a world previously divided into two super-powers, has made life much more vulnerable. Before one took sides, now one needs to search for societal values that fit our times, values that take our present situation seriously and are not just repetitions of yesterday.

We have only lately come to realize that we are all totally and thoroughly interdependent and that ripples on the water of one pond will unquestionably effect the other. We are not any more living in geographically defined areas: Hindus, Buddhists, Christians. We live next door to each other in the whole world, something which should strengthen the cause of interreligious dialogue as being at least one alternative to atomization and religious fundamentalism. The more we continue living as if oceans separated us from each other, the more we contribute to emptying our religious traditions of meaning for our contemporary world and different societies. The more we continue fortifying our own camps, erecting high walls and communicating with each other only through loud-speakers as a means of broadcasting our convictions, the more we lose in credibility and in value for the good

of society. An attitude of dialogue would remind us of the need to listen. The Jewish sages remind us of an important truth: 'It was not without reasons that God gave us two ears, but only one mouth.'

Our world is interdependent, something which should now prompt people of various faiths to come together, not to unite, not to merge nor to blend, but to affirm our differences, and yet committing ourselves to a new attitude to the other. Interreligious dialogue has been labelled syncretism, something which has in many quarters of religion made dialogue a suspect enterprise. But goal of dialogue is exactly the opposite, not syncretism, but opening ourselves to each other and learning to appreciate that we are different and probably always will be. Our unity is not in amalgamating but learning to affirm the other in his/her own capacity. Dialogue is about enabling people of various faiths to discover each other beyond inaccurate perceptions and distorted images.

Through dialogue we will discover what we really have in common and how we, each from the heart and soul of our religious traditions, can be of service to humankind. We need to discover new ways in which we can work together towards implementation of our visions and hopes for the world. The changing world calls us to a new pattern of working together and living out our faiths. While being true to our own faith traditions we can affirm solidarity with one another, we can become bearers of hope for our time. In our interdependent world, people of one religious tradition alone will not be able to find solutions to the ills of our time. It has become apparent that our world today needs, in all its interdependency, global answers to global threats. There is now particular Christian peace or Jewish justice or Muslim environmental policy. And even if there are particular confessional responses to the threats to the global village, we need to realize that that which we can do together, we should not do alone. This principle needs to be the guiding principle of interreligious dialogue and practice into the next millennium.

(to be continued...)



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# Be an Active Church Member

REV. DR. P. SURYA PRAKASH

## 1. What does being an active church member mean ?

It means sharing more fully in the life of your church. Active church members choose to:

- a. worship regularly,
- b. witness and share God's love in their lives.
- c. serve God and neighbour responsibly and faithfully;
- d. give their time, talent and money to further the church's mission, locally and globally.

## 2. Why is it important for you to be active in your church ?

- a. Because you are a part of the church. The church is more than the building you worship in. The church is people-the combined life of all who believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour.
- b. Because the church needs to you. As a follower of Christ, you are called to let your faith and your good works bring light to the world.

## 3. You may be already committed to Christ. Then you may ask why should I be more involved in the church? Because each of us needs the help and guidance of other Christians in order to follow Christ. You deepen your bond with:

- a. Jesus Christ. Christ's ministry belongs to the church. This means Christ wants each member in his service. Being an active church member allows you to express more fully your commitment to Christ through worshipping and serving God.
- b. Christ's followers. Active church membership strengthens your involvement with other members of the church. It enables you to enrich your relationship with other people and it increases your opportunities to love and be loved in the same way Christ loves us. The main reason for being active in the church is love-for God., ourselves and one another.

## The Benefits of active church membership:

- a. Personal growth that comes from your goals, priorities, and relations with others on your involvement with Christ.
- b. A sense of belonging, knowing you are a unique and contributing member in the faith community.
- c. Church growth as a result of renewed church activity, witness, mission and service by active members.
- d. A sense of fulfilment, knowing you are carrying out your role as a Christian-whether as a teacher, parent, counsellor, leader, volunteer or other lay person.
- e. Renewed purpose from the fact that, as a Christian you are participating in a special mission and a destiny that goes beyond day to day living.
- f. Spiritual joy-the talents and spiritual gifts of other active church members can be a joyous blessing to you. Your gifts can bring joy to others.
- g. Active church membership is also a chance for you to serve others. As you know Christ came not to be served but to serve (Matt. 20.28), so each of us, acting out of love, is called to minister to people's needs.

You can serve others in many different ways :  
Matthew 25.40 For example:

- \* Education, \* Youth and adult programmes, \* Worship programmes, \* Evangelising, \* Social ministry, \* Family ministry, \* Mission projects, \* Leadership, \* Counselling, \* Serving on committees, \* Community service etc.
- h. Active church membership is an ideal way to discover your gifts, whether for teaching, running an office, preparing food, or providing comfort. The church provides many avenues for service in the community.

- i. Active church membership is an ideal way to use your gifts to glorify God and serve others. Although God gives you a gift, it is up to you to nurture, strengthen and use it wisely. 1Peter 4.10.

#### **Guidelines to make your experience as an active church member satisfying and rewarding:**

- a. Start with the right attitude. Let your attitude be guided by obedience and faith. Look at each day as an opportunity to act on your love for Christ.
- b. Listen to God. Scriptures, sermons, singing and music, spiritual counsel, and prayer all enable you to receive God's guidance. Know how to listen when God speaks.
- c. Know your resources. Know your God given strengths and abilities. For instance, you may have enthusiasm, a special ability to communicate, and aptitude for management etc. Ask: How can I use my strengths to participate most effectively in church activities? which activities interest me ?
- d. Identify needs. Look around you. What are the physical and spiritual needs of your neighbours ? What your church's ministry and mission needs? The needs of youth or elderly. Who is working to meet them ? What opportunities are there for changing people's lives through the gospel ?

#### **Make your church and important part of your life:**

- a. Worship regularly at church and in small groups whenever you can. Regular worship is the best way to stay active and involved in church activities.
- b. Pray and seek God's counsel daily. Personal prayer is a powerful way to heal hurt and open doors to new walks of life.
- c. Welcome others to the church. Encourage new members to participate in church projects. Get to know them and make them feel personally involved in the life of the church.
- d. Consult your pastor and other leaders when deciding to undertake new projects or activities. Your pastor can help you to discover your particular calling and help, make sure that both your needs and the church are being met.

So you can be an active church member and experience the unique joy of experiencing Christ; nurture your gifts and talents; put your faith in Christ into positive action; and work to fulfill Christ's mission in the world. You can use your body, mind and spirit to serve God better.

#### **Being a Leader in the church**

The word leadership connotes power, authority, honour, prestige, or personal advantage. This is not Christian leadership.

Christian leadership seeks to be of service, rather than to dominate

Christian leadership encourages and inspires

Christian leadership respects rather than exploits others

Christian leadership reflects, prays and acts according to Jesus

Christ's words: See Math. 20:27.

The best leaders are:

1. aware of their impact on others;
2. open to feedback and suggestions;
3. work hard to check their negative tendencies

#### **Leadership Characteristics:**

1. Capacity (intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality and judgement).
2. Achievement (scholarship, knowledge, accomplishments).
3. Responsibility (dependability, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, desire to excel).
4. Participation. (activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability and humour).
5. Be a leader people follow by example, communication, ability, love, motivation, strategy and authority.

#### **Biblical Model of Leadership**

##### **1. Servant Leaders:**

The model of leadership that the Bible consistently commend to the people is the servant leader-Ebed Jahweh. Those who are qualified to be appointed as leaders are appointed to serve. Whether judges, kings, prophets, priests or disciples/apostles, are not to lord it over people, but to serve them.

##### **2. Pre-requisites for servant-leadership:**

- a. Conversion.
- b. A renewed mind
- c. Exemplary obedience

3. Varieties of servant-leadership:—

- a. Leaders with vision.
- b. Inspirers of cooperation.
- c. Disciples of Christ.
- d. Restorers of the weak.

4. Functions of a leader:—

- a. Coordinating the programmes.
- b. Building the community.
- c. Communicating the message of good will.
- d. Delegating the responsibilities.
- e. Managing conflicts.

5. Administration in the church and leadership:

- a. Leading by example.
- b. Planning in cooperation with others.
- c. Organising groups.
- d. Staffing and selecting competent co-workers.

Decision-making process:

There are a variety of decision makers:

- 1. Procrastinators—Those who prone to postponing decision-making.
- 2. Vascillators—Those who think to and fro/pros and cons, but never decide.
- 3. Impulsive—Those who make decisions with little concern for feelings and facts and resources under impulses.
- 4. Fence sitters—Those who do not like to take any risks.
- 5. Professional—Those who need all facts.
- 6. Pipe smokers—Those who would like to think and think...
- 7. Combinators and integrator—Those who take all the aspects into consideration and make appropriate timely, and acceptable decisions

Different types of Decision making:

- 1. Single individuals one person deciding for other.
- 2. Minority decisions—a few persons deciding for many.
- 3. Majority decisions—A majority deciding for all.
- 4. Decision by consensus—decision by common agreement

5. Unanimous decisions—decisions made by all

Church Registers and Records:

Every church needs to keep the following records or registers:

- 1. Register of Baptisms.
- 2. Register of Confirmations.
- 3. Register of Marriages.
- 4. Register of deaths and burials.
- 5. Minutes books of committee meetings and general body.
- 6. Records of programmes, plans and projects.
- 7. Register of inventory.
- 8. Land records, property registers, pattas, registration etc.
- 9. Account Books and audit report.
- 10. Collection Books—weekly, monthly, special etc.
- 11. List of pastor, secretaries, treasurers and other leaders.
- 12. Visitors book.
- 13. Separate registers for:
  - a. Sunday School.
  - b. Youth fellowship.
  - c. Women's fellowship.
  - d. Festivals.
  - e. Worship services—rota.
  - f. Guest preachers.

- 14. Pastor's diary—itinerary.
- 15. Register for the official visits of the Bishop, and other officers.
- 16. Local Correspondence.
- 17. Correspondence with the Diocese or Synod officers
- 18. Annual reports.
- 19. Collection of church Bulletins.
- 20. Collection of themes and sermons preached.
- 21. Constitution of the Diocese or Synod.

*(Notes prepared for the Medak Diocesan Lay Leaders conference in Secunderabad from September 14-15, 1996 under the presidency of the Rt. Rev. B.P. Sugandhar Bishop in Medak)*

# News from the Dioceses . . .

## MADURAI-RAMNAD DIOCESE



Rev. D. Thavaraj David has been consecrated and installed as the Bishop in the diocese of Madurai-Ramnad on by the Moderator, Bishop Vasanth P. Dandin. This was prompted because Bishop D. Pothirajulu had relinquish his duties as the bishop of the diocese, although he continues his ministry as the director of the newly formed laity department at the Synod level and also looking after the COLT at Madurai as its director.

Bishop Jason Dharmaraj, former Deputy Moderator and the bishop in the diocese of Tirunelveli, preached at the Consecration service.

Bishop William Moses, the Deputy Moderator, Bishop Paulraj, Bishop Trinity Bhaskaran, Bishop Daniel Abraham, Bishop Ezra Sargunam, Archbishop Arochiasamy, Bishop Pothirajulu, Prof. George Koshy, the General Secretary and Mr. Frederick William, the Treasurer and many other representatives of the Institutions were present.

Bishop Thavaraj David has a good experience in the church's administration. He served the diocese in the

various capacities. He was the Deputy Chairman of the diocese for two terms; diocesan Secretary for two terms and he was the diocesan Treasurer for two years. Out of ten years of Synod membership, he was on the Synod Executive Committee for eight years, a remarkable record, indeed.

He and his wife are equally well educated. He holds M.A. and B.D., she Mrs. Selvabai David is a Postgraduate with B.T. and Diploma in Teaching the Deaf (Edinburgh). He too had one year pastoral Training in England.

He is a silent but great worker. He has been the founder and correspondent of many school of all levels for a period of two decades. He has a credit of building 328 houses for the cyclone hit villagers through CASA.

Simple but ever smiling, unassuming but always hardworking, Bishop Thavaraj David takes over the charge at a critical time but his age and experience, the rapport he built with the people and his decent public relations and above all, with God's guidance he would forge ahead in taking his diocese into the new millennium.

We implore God's blessings upon his ministry and congratulate him whole heartedly.

DASS BABU

## KARNATAKA SOUTHERN DIOCESE

Silver Jubilee of the Diocese:—On trifurcation of the then Mysore Diocese, Karnataka Southern Diocese came into existence on 1st May 1970. On 1st May 1995, the Diocese has completed 25 years of its existence. In this connection the Diocese arranged 2 year long programme from 1994 to 1996. Programmes like 'Festival of Peace' Gospel Harvest (Programme on Evangelism), Lait Conference, Pastors' Conference, Women's Conference etc. were held. Concluding Ceremony of Silver Jubilee Celebrations was held at the CSI Shanti Cathedral, Balmatta Mangalore, on 1st May 1996 at 5.00 p.m. After colorful procession from the Bishop's House, Special Divine Service was held at the Cathedral, followed by valedictory function. Rt. Rev. D.P. Shettian, Bishop presided over the function.

Rev. Premkumar Soans, Rev. Samuel J. Soans, Rev. J.E.N. Amanna, Rev. Harry John, Rev. Devaraj Bangera, Rev. Samuel Jathanna, Rev. M. Suguna, Rev. G. Chinnappa, Rev. Sr. Sujatha, Rev. Wesley Palanna assisted in conducting the Divine Worship. The Late Rt. Rev. Dr. Basil D'Souza, Bishop of Roman Catholic Diocese, Mangalore was the Chief guest and released the souvenir which was brought out in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee. Rev. J.B. Challa, Dist. Superintendent of Methodist Church, Bombay; Rev. John Benedict, Pastor, representing UBM Church Council, Bombay, were present and conveyed their greetings on behalf of their Churches. Mr. S. Kanchan, Editor of the Souvenir, spoke about the souvenir and conveyed thanks to the Advertisers, Officers and others who helped in giving required reports and articles. The Pastors and Pastorate Committee Members of Mangalore City Churches made physical arrangements. Y.M.P.U. of Sushanthi Church, Mercarahill, Mangalore arranged refreshments to the gathering. Rev. D. Bangera, Rev. J.E.N. Amanna and members of Planning Committee and Editorial Committee organised the Programme. Late Rt. Rev. Dr. C.D. Jathanna, Rev. D.S. Shathananda, Mr. Jayakar Sadhu, Mr. K.S. Aiman were honoured by Rt. Rev. D.P. Shettian for their contributions during the establishment of the Diocese.

Rt. Rev. D.P. Shettian was honoured by Rev. Premkumar Soans, Vice President. Contributions of Rev. J.L. Sadananda, Mr. J.C. Samarth, Mr. A.E. Amanna during the time of formation of the Diocese was also recalled.

*Sunday School Teachers' Training:* Sunday School Teachers' Training camp was held at Christa Sevakee Ashram, Parpale, Karkala, from 5th to 14th May 1996. 32 candidates from various Churches trained at this Camp. Rev. J.K. Salains, Rev. Harsha Kumar, Rev. Dr. J.S. Sadananda, Rev. Dr. Dhanaraj, Rev. Sydney S. Salins, Rev. H. Cabral, Kum. Vijaya Prema, Mr. William Carey, Rev. W.F. James, Rev. Dr. G. Shiri, Dr. (Ms.) Lalitha Kumari, Rev. S. Jathanna, Mr. Reginald Soans, Rev. Sr. Sukumari Jathana were the leaders. Biblical perspectives, communication Media, Christian Education System, History of Sunday School, Social Perspective, Children Psychology were the topics covered. the Training Camp organised by the Christian Education Committee of the Diocese was co-ordinated by Rev. Harsha Kumar.

*Women's Conference:* Diocesan level Women's Conference was held at CSI Wesley Church, Hassan on 18th and 19th May 1996. About 60 delegates from various Churches participated in the Conference. Rt. Rev. D.P. Shettian, Bishop; Rev. D. Bangera, Treasurer; Rev. (Miss) Ivaileen H. Amanna, General Secretary, CSI-WF; Rev. (Mrs.) Nirmala Vasantha Kumar, Secretary, AICCW;

Rev. Franklin S.W. Prabhu; and Rev. Samuel J. Soans were the leaders. women's Fellowship and Pastorate Committee of CSI Wesley Church, Hassan were the hosts. Rev. (Mrs.) R.S. Jathanna, Secretary Diocesan W.F. co-ordinated the Conference.

*New Church Building at Kulai, New Mangalore:*



Panambur was an out-station of Balmatta Shanthi Church, with a small congregation gathering for weekly worship. Later when New Mangalore Port was established at Panambur, the land where the Divine Worship was being conducted was acquired by the Government. Hence the congregation has obtained a rented room at the nearby place called Bykampady. For more than 20 years the congregation was conducting Divine Worship in the rented small room. During this tenure of more than 20 years, the congregation was organised into an independent Pastorate. In the meantime the Pastorate has opened an out-stations at Krishnapura and a small Church has been built there. A Day Care Centre has also been opened at Bykampady which was functioning at the rented building where Divine Worship was being conducted. Later since the owner of the building requested us to vacate the building the Day Care Centre has been shifted to a nearby village. Further, since the place has become an Industrial Centre, Christian population also grown. Therefore, on the request of the congregation, the Diocesan Officers arranged purchasing of site at nearby village called Kulai. A new Church Building has been built with an estimated amount of Rs. 6 lakhs. New Church building was named 'CSI Christa Kanthi Church, Kulai' and dedicated for public worship by Rt. Rev. D.P. Shettian. Bishop Rev. Devaraj Bangera, Diocesan Treasurer; Rev. Dr. J.S. Sadananda, Rev. J.L. Sadananda, Rev. R.G. Heri, Rev. Samuel Jathanna, and Rev. (Mrs.) R.S. Jathanna, Local pastor assisted in the dedication worship.



We are happy to inform that a remarkable event of first Women Ordination in the Diocese of Vellore took place on Sunday, the 28th April, 1996 at the CSI Central Church, Vellore. The Rt. Rev. Dr. R.T. Baskaran, Bishop in Vellore took this historic decision in the Ministerial Committee and ordained three women, namely,

Rev. (Mrs) Leela Rajanandham, Rev. (Mrs) Glory Raja and Rev. (Mrs) Beulah Sathyaraj. Along with these three women, Rev. Jared Arul Jebareuben and Rev. Mohan Raj were also ordained as Deacons during this Divine Service.

Rev. Jeevan Babu, N.C.C.I. Secretary, Unit II, Mission and Evangelism, delivered the Lord's message. Rev. Florence Deenedayalan, Secretary of the Association for Theologically Trained Women in India and Rev. Charles Jadhav, General Secretary of National Missionary Society of India, made the Service colourful with their presence.

In this historic, solemn and orderly Service, nearly 2000 Congregation members and leaders and all the Pastors in the Diocese participated.

The Bishop's Chaplain thanked the Bishop, Officers of the Diocese and the Presbyters and Office-bearers of the Central Church, dignitaries and all those who have prayed and helped for the success of this jubilant Divine Service.

We are delighted to inform that all the Ordained women were posted in different Pastorates for Pastoral work.

In future, candidates for Ministry shall be considered irrespective of gender-male or female. Thereby we are fulfilling the teachings of St. Paul-'There is neither male or female for Ye all are one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

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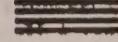
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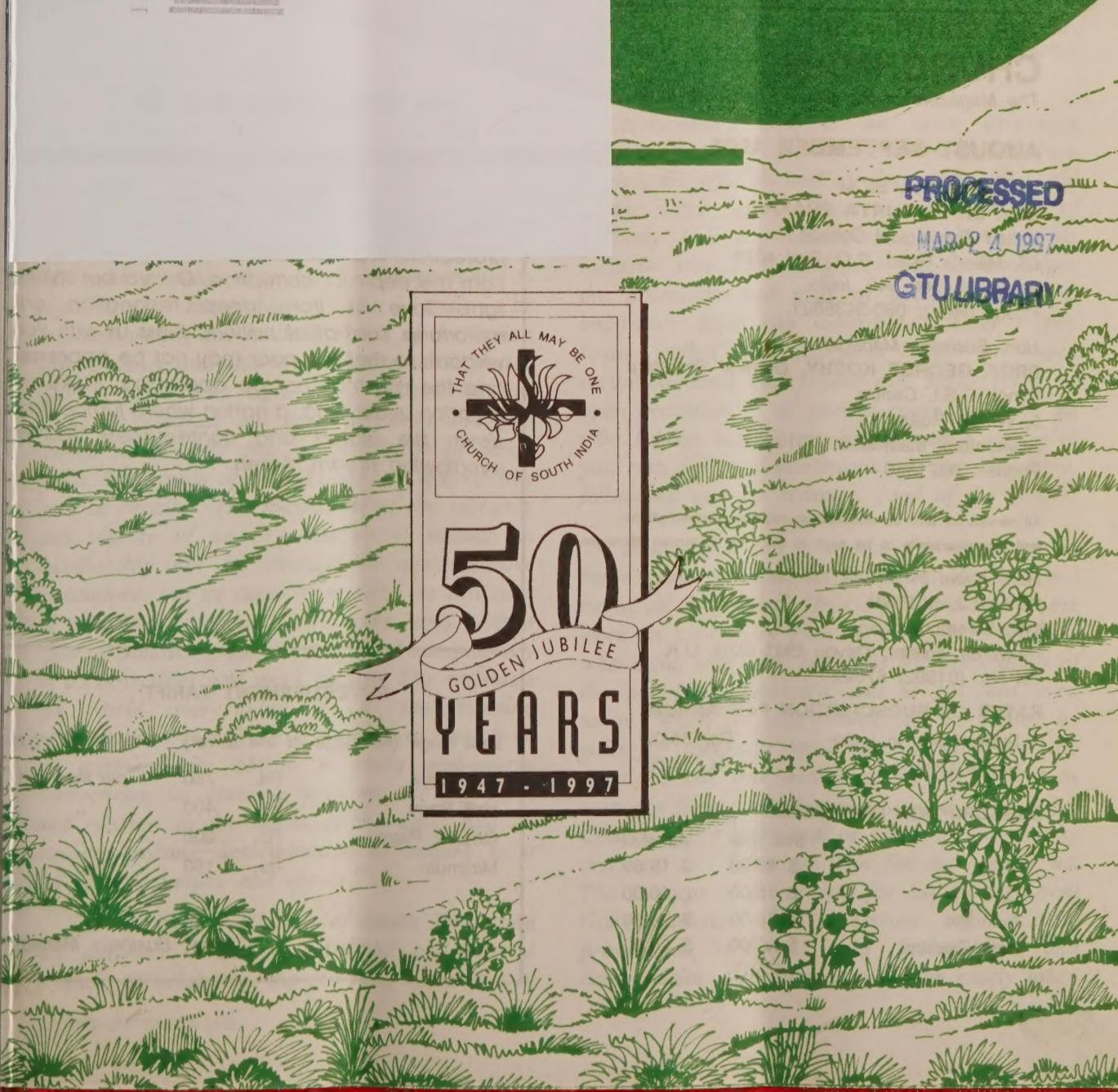
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